

SHIP must be the important consideration from now on.

Every County Society should increase its scientific work to a maximum and every member should participate in it to the end that our members shall keep constantly up-to-date and be constantly improving themselves.

The people of your community should be taught that your Medical Society is a scientific school of medicine; that the work of the Society is for the betterment of its members and their increased ability to care for their patients professionally; that the badge of membership means identification of the holder as a reputable, upright, well qualified practitioner of medicine, recognized as such by his colleagues all over the state.

If the Legislature is bent upon destroying the legal safeguards of the people against quacks, let us, through our County Societies, provide to the limit of our ability a moral safeguard in the shape of membership in such societies.

With the best wishes for the success of your endeavors in these directions, and with the earnest hope that you may be energetic for the right and for improvement and for the protection of public health, I remain,

Respectfully yours,

O. D. HAMLIN, M. D., President.

A meeting of the secretaries of state medical organizations was held in Chicago, October 23 and

NOTABLE MEETING.

24, 1912, that was in many ways the most remarkable medical meeting ever held. It was called by the Committee on Uniform Membership, of the American Medical Association, under approval of the Board of Trustees, and the actual traveling expenses of the secretaries were paid by the Association. When the roll was called it was found that 38 states were represented, indicating pretty conclusively a widespread interest in the problems presented by the work of medical organizations and a serious determination to attempt to solve them. The work of the past was reviewed and the difficulties that exist under present chaotic conditions were summarized in eight questions which were discussed by all present. The sessions lasted for two days and an abstract of the meeting will be found on another page in this issue of the JOURNAL. Such a meeting might well be held every year and thus our various medical organizations be brought into closer touch.

Nearly every state medical organization that has a medical defense feature has noted, in the last

MEDICAL DEFENSE.

year or year and a half, a marked increase in the number of alleged malpractice suits that are being brought against physicians. The last report in New York contains the following: "The reason why a larger number of cases have been brought this year than for many years past, I

cannot satisfactorily explain except in one case * * ." In Kentucky conditions are evidently much the same for in the report for 1912 the recommendation is made that the assessment for medical defense be increased from 50c to \$1.00 per member and it is prophesied that the work for the next year will be much more expensive than in the past. The following portion of the Kentucky report is well worth careful thought:

"We would especially advise the doctor to be guarded in handling all cases as the tendency to sue is becoming more common especially in fractures. In fracture cases it is well to follow the example of a certain doctor. He always asks for a consultant. One patient said to him, 'Why is it, Doctor, that you always ask for another doctor in these cases?' The doctor's reply was, 'If things go wrong you would have a dozen lawyers.' On account of the frequency of suits for malpractice, our responsibility has increased and we should not hesitate to call a consultant or be watchful of all facts pertaining to treatment and management of these cases. Let me remind you that all cases are not surgical, the general practitioner is suffering most."

The same thing is as true in California as it is in New York or Kentucky; malpractice suits are rapidly increasing in number. Is it another expression of the feeling of antagonism to all things medical? Is it another evidence of the general feeling of unrest, of rebellion against any sort of control or supervision and especially intellectual or scientific control? It would seem so. The suggestion to have always a consultant in these cases is good and it would not be a bad idea for the State Society to make a rule that no case of alleged malpractice based on the treatment of a fractured bone would be defended by the Society unless the physician in charge had had a consultant in the treatment of the case.

Above all things, watch your words. Do not criticize the work of your fellow physician; it may start a suit. Walk carefully and considerably lest you also become the target for malicious abuse and unfair criticism.

Elsewhere in this issue we publish a letter from our Attorney in Los Angeles, Mr. Morrow, to-

DOCTOR OR DANGER?

gether with some portions of the testimony of a physician in a suit for alleged malpractice which we are defending in the South. A physician with the high degree of ignorance demonstrated by this man's testimony, is a menace to the community. It is an outrage that a reputable physician's professional standing may, at any time, be jeopardized and the Society put to a large expense, by the criticism and the testimony of such an ignoramus. A man practicing medicine—yet ignorant, according to his own testimony, of the anatomy of one of the joints most frequently injured! Do not fail to look up the transcript of this testimony and read it carefully.